

FEBRUARY 20, 2014

The Town Council met in regular session at the Town Hall at 5:00 p.m.

Present were: STRAW, GIBBS, WARRUM, WALKER, and WILSON along with Clerk-Treasurer Karla Atkins and Attorney Adam Farrar.

The following visitors were present: Betty Gibbs, Barb McConnell, Randall Cooley, Jennifer & Alvin Blaylock, Gaelan Finney-Day, Keddy Hutson, Larry Robb, Kenyon & Marshal Bailey, Patricia Gosh, Carroll Marcus, Casey Goldman, Virginia & Don Alsop, Valerie Werkmeister, Amanda Bryden, Catherine Cotrupi, David Campbell, Bobby Grider, John Dailey, and Scott Champlin.

Councilman Wilson made and Warrum seconded a motion the minutes of the previous meeting be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Wilson reported he has had a short preliminary phone conversation with Vectren regarding the gas utility. There will be a follow-up meeting that he and Councilman Gibbs will participate in.

Councilman Wilson reported he is working on scheduling some clean-up dates at the cemetery. He is also looking into getting some of the stones cleaned.

President Straw asked if Council members had reviewed the indemnity and hold harmless agreement that Attorney Farrar had prepared. This concerns the proposed employment of Beth LaVay as a deputy marshal. Since the agreement must also be approved by the Posey Co. Commissioners, Town Marshal Scott Champlin stated he plans to attend their meeting in case there are questions.

Larry Robb, with the Posey Co. Emergency Management Agency, introduced Randall Cooley, with the IN State Fire Marshal's office. They requested permission to use the former New Harmony School property for a training exercise. The proposed dates for the training are September 21-25. There was discussion about having access to the school restrooms, but Council stated there would be no guarantee that they would be operational at that time. Councilman Gibbs made and Walker seconded a motion that the request by the IN State Fire Marshall's office to use the former New Harmony School property be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Walker made and Gibbs seconded a motion that the checks presented on the list of checks outstanding by Clerk-Treasurer Atkins be cancelled and receipted back to the funds upon which they were originally drawn. All were in favor. Motion carried.

President Straw read Ordinance 2014-2 in title only. This ordinance establishes the meeting schedule of the Town Council. Councilman Wilson made and Warrum seconded a motion that Ordinance 2014-2 be adopted. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Carroll Marcus, representing the New Harmony School Alumni Association, requested permission to put up their blue and white flags for the Memorial Day weekend. Council approved the request.

Kennedy Hutson addressed Council about the results of the redevelopment study he completed for the former New Harmony School property. They conducted interviews and compiled data based upon those interviews. They then prepared drawings based upon three different scenarios: Retaining the building, retaining a portion of the building, and removing the building. Mr. Hutson presented detailed drawings of options for the property including housing, parks, athletic fields, wetlands, etc. Council members thanked Mr. Hutson for a nice presentation.

Councilman Gibbs made and Walker seconded a motion the street closure request from Historic New Harmony for Heritage Week, April 23-25, be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Gas/street superintendent Bobby Grider presented a proposed traffic sign retro reflectivity maintenance and management plan. The Federal Highway Administration has mandated that such a plan be in place and implemented. Basically every street sign in Town will need to be replaced within the next five years. The annual cost is estimated to be \$4,000. Councilman Gibbs made and Warrum seconded a motion that the traffic sign retro reflectivity maintenance and management plan as prepared by Supt. Grider be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried. There was discussion on a color for the street name signs, but no decision was made.

Park Board President Barb McConnell reported the Park Board will continue meeting the second Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

Park Board President McConnell announced that a group of students from Evansville Day School will be doing service projects in Town March 19-21. She welcomed suggestions from Council for some projects they would like to see done.

Barb McConnell, on behalf of the Garden Club, inquired about the trees that were planted at the Tree of Life building. The building has been demolished and the lot cleared. She also pointed out a bench had been placed there and it has also been removed. She asked that the Garden Club be notified in the future so items they have planted can be removed. President Straw stated she was told of the demolition plans, and that he offered assistance when a date was set to move the trees. Mrs. McConnell stated she thought President Straw was going to contact her and let her know when the time was right to remove the items. President Straw stated he does not believe that is what was said and that Mrs. McConnell had sixty days between when the demolition was approved and when it was completed.

Carroll Marcus asked if permission could be sought prior to installing a tent at Murphy Park for an event. President Straw stated the Park Board should be contacted about this.

David Campbell asked why there was no non-residential plan included in Mr. Hutson's presentation. Mr. Hutson commented that if the entire building is kept, it could be used as non-residential. Mr. Campbell stated the Town is prohibited from utilizing the property for educational purposes for ten years. Councilman Wilson stated this stipulation is not in the agreement the Town signed or in the deed, so it is up for debate as to whether or not the prohibition is in effect.

Casey Goldman, representing the Abilene Dream Center, expressed interest in the school property to expand their ministry. They assist people with needs such as mental illness, drug problems, etc. President Straw agreed to get in contact with Mr. Goldman.

Councilman Wilson reported the Tree of Life property is ready for redevelopment. He has prepared a request for proposals to distribute to developers. He suggested the proposals be submitted prior to the next Council meeting. Council would then interview the developers and select one. Council would then enter into an agreement with the developer to develop the site. Per Attorney Farrar, two appraisals must be obtained on the property before it can be sold. Councilman Wilson recommended that the same two appraisers that appraised the property a few years back when it had improvements be hired to re-appraise the property. Since this is an economic development project, it is a simpler project than just selling the property. Attorney Farrar suggested holding off on getting the property appraised until the Town is farther along in the process. Councilman Gibbs made and Walker seconded a motion that the request for proposals for the Tree of Life property as prepared by Councilman Wilson be approved. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilman Warrum made and Wilson seconded a motion the claims be allowed and the Clerk pay the same. All were in favor. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Joe Straw, President of Town Council

Attest:

Karla L. Atkins, Clerk-Treasurer